

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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TAGS: ELAB, JA

SUBJECT: SOHYO ELECTS NEW OFFICERS

REF: TOKYO 10912

1. SOHYO CONCLUDED ITS REGULAR ANNUAL CONVENTION JULY 23 WITH ELECTION OF TEACHERS UNION PRESIDENT (NIKKYOSO) - MOTOFUMI MAKIEDA - AS ITS CHAIRMAN AND NATIONAL RAILROAD UNION (KOKURO) SEC GEN - MITSUO TOMIZUKA - AS ITS SEC GEN. NEWLY ELECTED VICE PRESIDENTS ARE METALWORKERS (ZENKOKU KINSOKU) PRESIDENT GOSAKU SATAKE, JAPANESE EXPRESS WORKERS UNION (ZENNITSU) PRESIDENT YUTAKA NAKAGAWA, POSTAL WORKERS UNION (ZENTEI) PRESIDENT HEIJI ISHII, PREFECTURAL AND MUNICIPAL WORKERS UNION (JICHIRO) PRESIDENT YASUO MARUYAMA AND FORMER HEAD OF SOHYO PLANNING BUREAU RYOICHI YASUTSUNE. NEW ACTION PROGRAM REAFFIRMS SOHYO'S EXCLUSIVE SUPPORT OF SOCIALIST PARTY (JSP), LABELS THIS YEAR'S WAGE SETTLEMENTS DEFEAT FOR WORKERS AND ENDORSES CREATION OF BROADLY BASED POPULAR MOVEMENT TO PUSH FOR

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NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE LEGISLATION, REFORM OF PENSION

SYSTEM AND TAX CUTS. OTHERWISE, ACTION PROGRAM CONTAINS LITTLE THAT IS NEW AND REPEATS "CLASS STRUGGLE" THEMES OF PREVIOUS YEARS. CONVENTION SPEAKERS GENERALLY TOOK DIM VIEW OF EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE REUNIFICATION OF LABOR MOVEMENT OUTSIDE SOHYO'S FRAMEWORK, STEERED CLEAR OF TAKING SIDES IN SINO-SOVIET CONTROVERSY AND GAVE RITUAL ENDORSEMENT TO NORTH KOREAN DEMANDS FOR WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS FROM ROK. OTHERWISE, LITTLE DISCUSSION OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. DELEGATES FROM MODERATE STEELWORKERS UNION (TEKKO ROREN) AND PRIVATE RAILROAD WORKERS UNION (SHITETSU SOREN) CONSPICUOUSLY REFRAINED FROM PARTICIPATING IN DEBATE.

2. IN ELECTING MAKIEDA, SOHYO FOR FIRST TIME SINCE ITS FOUNDING HAS CHOSEN AS CHAIRMAN UNION LEADER HAILING FROM PUBLIC SECTOR, THEREBY DRAMATIZING ITS STEADY LOSS OF MEMBERSHIP AND INFLUENCE IN PRIVATE SECTOR INDUSTRIES OVER LAST DECADE. EVEN AFTER CONVENTION OPENED, SOHYO MAINSTREAM, WAS UNABLE TO CONVINCE ZENNITSU PRESIDENT NAKAGAWA TO ACCEPT POST, AND THEREFORE WAS FACED WITH TWO ALTERNATIVES: ALLOWING CHAIRMANSHIP TO GO BY DEFAULT TO ONLY ACTIVE CANDIDATE, FAR LEFT COMMUNIST PARTY SYMPATHIZER SATAKE (REFTEL) OR TO TURN TO MAINSTREAM CANDIDATE FROM PUBLIC SECTOR. SOHYO LEADERSHIP ADOPTED LATTER ALTERNATIVE AT INSISTANCE OF ELDER STATESMAN HARAGUCHI, WHO HAS ATTEMPTED OVER THE YEARS TO PREVENT SOHYO'S DRIFTING EVEN FARTHER TO THE LEFT.

3. ONLY OTHER NOTABLE CONVENTION DEVELOPMENT WAS SUCCESSFUL EFFORT BY HARAGUCHI AND OTHER MODERATE LEADERS TO BLOCK FORMER SOHYO CHAIRMAN KAORU OTA'S EFFORTS TO WIN VICE PRESIDENCY AND THEREBY GAIN RE-ENTRY TO EXECUTIVE BOARD. SINCE STEPPING DOWN AS SOHYO CHAIRMAN IN MID-60'S, OTA NOT ONLY HAS ALIGNED HIMSELF INCREASINGLY MORE OPENLY WITH COMMUNIST ELEMENTS IN SOHYO BUT ALSO HAS ACHIEVED STATUS OF LABOR CELEBRITY THROUGH CONSTANT "BAD MOUTHING" OF HIS SOHYO COLLEAGUES IN THE MEDIA. SHOESMITH

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